Stakeholder Management for Self-Reliant Rural Development

Nirajan Shrestha [a], Sudarshan Raj Tiwari [b], Sangeeta Singh [c]

[a, b, c] *Department of Architecture and Urban Planning, Pulchowk Campus, IOE, Tribhuvan University, Nepal*
Corresponding Email: [a] 073msed459.nirajan@pcampus.edu.np, [b] srtiwari@ioe.edu.np, [c] sangeeta@ioe.edu.np

Abstract
Over recent years, people living in the rural areas are facing numerous social, economic and environmental changes and challenges. Some of those challenges have been increasingly addressed through the lenses of technological developments and advancements. The recent major earthquake of April 25, 2015 has also done serious damage to most of the rural areas in the central Nepal. Sindhupalchok being recognized as one of the most damaged district due to the earthquake, many governmental and non-governmental organizations have been involved in the area mostly for the reconstruction of the village. It is also equally important for the village to gain its original identity as well as have the development to gain its smart characteristics as an ideal village. In doing so, we are trying to find out different ways to manage the stakeholders of the area to push the developmental as well as reconstruction process in a smart and sustainable way.

Keywords
Stakeholder management, Self-reliant, Reconstruction

1. Introduction

As per Investopedia a stakeholder can be defined as, "A stakeholder is a party that has an interest in a company and can either affect or be affected by the business." (Investopedia, n.d.) It can also be defined as; a stakeholder is anyone who is directly or indirectly benefited by the business. It includes different category of peoples from local peoples who are directly benefited to the investors who are indirectly benefited by the project. Stakeholders are one of the greatest sources of developments in any part of the country making it self-sustainable if they could be managed properly. One of the greatest challenges in introducing sustainability solutions lies in their acceptance by stake-holders (Keitsch). So more importance must be given to the management of stakeholders for the smart development of village. Also the major earthquake of 25th April, 2015 has also drastically worsened the situation, the further development works is very much in need to regain the village's identity in a more sustainable way.

2. Objectives of the study

General objectives

The main objective of this research is to find out how the stakeholders can be managed such that the area starts to develop its smart rural characteristics.

Special objectives

- To find out different parameters of smart rural settlement and relate it to the case area.

- To find out the local stakeholders as well as other related stakeholders who can contribute to the area.

- To find out the different ways in Managing Stakeholders and recommend a model for post-earthquake reconstruction smart village.

3. Methodology

There are three different objectives for which they have separate research methods and expected outputs as shown in the diagram above. I have chosen three different settlement with different characteristics of Ward-6 of Melamchi Municipality. Initially thorough study is done to find out the different parameters of Smart rural settlement. In the same way study is also done to find out the different ways in Managing Stakeholders. After finding out the different parameters of smart rural settlement, some of the important parameters are selected as per their importance in the area. Some research is also done to

find how the implementation of selected parameters helps in driving the rural settlement to develop its smart characteristics.

Some questionnaire were prepared to find out the details about the conditions of different parameters of smartness. Similarly other questionnaire were prepared regarding the information about the stakeholders of the area and how they have been involved in the making of smartness in the area. In the same way questionnaire were also prepared regarding how the stakeholders of the area are managed from selection to involvement and participation.

4. Limitations of the study

Instead of choosing the whole ward as my case area I have only choose three different types of settlement from the area for my research.

Among the selected 3 areas also I have chosen one village to do detail study while only surface study was done for the other two settlement. Policy is also very important part for the stakeholder management and smart rural development but its research is excluded.

For the stakeholder management process only education part will be done in detail and other will be done in brief only.

5. Problem statement

The development earlier was more centered in the urban areas leaving the rural areas lag far behind in the developmental activities. This led to the migration in the peoples from the rural areas to the urban areas where they could get more facilities, job opportunities and easier lifestyle. Most of the migrations was found to be of youths (aged 15-49 years) leaving only the children and old peoples in the area who also have difficult lifestyle there.

The problem of lagging developmental activities is more worsened by the damages done by the recent earthquake of 2015. Most of the houses and structures are damaged by the earthquake leaving the area with only scraps of the damaged buildings. Similarly there is also loss of lives and property of the people there.

With the extremely devastating condition of the village, there is also increase in many organizations for the reconstruction and development of the village. Many stakeholders have come to the place and are involved in many different activities. There are also

many stakeholders who are involved in the similar activities. So there might be the risk that different stakeholders have different perspective for the development so one's idea might not be liked by other and there could occur misunderstanding between the stakeholders. But if they could coordinate with each other than the overall result might be more fruitful.

6. Rationale

As per Investopedia a stakeholder can be defined as, "A stakeholder is a party that has an interest in a company and can either affect or be affected by the business." (Investopedia, n.d.) It can also be defined as; a stakeholder is anyone who is directly or indirectly benefited by the business. It includes different category of peoples from local peoples who are directly benefited to the investors who are indirectly benefited by the project.

7. Stakeholder Management

Stakeholder can be defined as "An individual, group, or organization who may affect, be affected by, or perceive itself to be affected by a decision, activity, or outcome of a project." (Managing Stakeholders, 2017)

They can be internal and external, owners and investors, sellers and contractors, government agencies and media outlets, individual citizens and society at large. Stakeholders may be viewed as positive or negative (Managing Stakeholders, 2017)

- Negative stakeholders are against the project's success
- Positive stakeholders support project success

8. Case studies

The project area is a small marketplace named Talamarang which lies in Ward no. 6 of Melamchi Municipality. The municipality was established in 2071 BS. It lies in Sindhupalchok district of Province-3, Nepal. The field area has majority of plane land topography and has an altitude of 950m above sea level. The majority of ethnic groups found in the area are Tamang followed by Chhetri and Newar.

8.1 Selection of field area

The ward has different kinds of settlements from sparse settlement to dense sentiment as well as easily accessible settlements to difficultly accessible settlements. It has traditional as well as modern settlements. So considering all the different kinds of settlements I have choose three different category of settlement. They are Talamarang Bazar (new dense settlement developed around the Helambu highway), Chhap settlement (traditional dense settlement accessible through walking) and Terse settlement (sparse settlement on slopped hill). Among the three settlement, detail study will be done of Talamarang Bazar and only surface study will be done for the other two settlements.

8.2 Physical aspects

Most of the area are covered by mountains with sloped land topography and only few areas near the river and some other areas are flat land. The area is mostly covered by forests and agricultural lands. The settlement is also mostly sparsely distributed except the market area and the old settlement of Chhap in the slopped hill. Electricity is available to almost all houses of the ward. Before about two years the electricity was of the main line of NEA, but now it has off grid electricity. The installation of off grid electricity one hand has benefited the central electricity grid by reducing the power load on the main line preventing the country from long hours of load shedding. Whereas on the other hand it has benefited the locals by having continuous supply of electricity unaffected by the national power cut offs.

8.3 Socio-cultural aspects

The peoples living in the area are familiar to each other. During some of the major festivals like Holi and Dashain, peoples from most of the nearby settlements gather in the marketplace, Talamarang Bazar making the area very much crowded. Majority of the households have their members abroad and some are in urban areas of Nepal. Remittance is also one of the major source of income for the people there. Due to this reason, some people have decreased their interest in working for earning in the area. It is also tourist area with different natural sceneries and way to famous destinations like Helambu and Gosaikuda (lake). Some peoples even come to the area to visit Ambathan tunnel which is constructed by MWSP for supplying water to Kathmandu.

8.4 Economic aspects

Agriculture is the major occupation of peoples of the area. They grow rice, wheat and corn as cash crops and vegetables as food crops. Animal husbandry is second major occupation in which includes cattle rearing and selling their byproducts. The cattle rearing includes cow, buffalo, goat and chicken. The market center area have business as their major occupation. Remittance is also one of the major source of income to the area. Different NGOs' and INGOs' which have come in the resent years mostly after the earthquake of 2015 have also been providing job opportunities to the people there.

9. Findings and Discussions

From the field study of Talamarang village of Melamchi municipality following things are found:

- The reconstruction of the village is found to be going in better way with local materials. The locals also find economical to use the scrap stones from their old houses or reconstruction. Stakeholder participation is also found to be better for this sector.

- The water management for both drinking water and irrigation is good. Stakeholder involvement seen better in this project from design and constriction to implementation phase.

- A very seek stakeholder participation was seem in the waste management sector. There is concrete well for the burning of waste in one area. There is no any waste water management in the entire ward. And there is also no waste management projects from the government side so the waste has degraded the village in uncontrolled way.

9.1 Framework for stakeholder participation

The following framework is prepared for data collection. It consists of four steps. They are:

- `Stakeholder identification`
- `Design of projects`
- `Implementation of projects` and
- `Evaluation`

9.2 Shortlist of the projects for stakeholder management

Following are the shortlist of the projects for stakeholder management among which the Education project will be done for stakeholder management.

- `Education`
- `Reconstruction`
- `Women empowerment`
- `Water supply`
- `Agriculture` and
- `Waste management`

10. Stakeholder Management for Education

It consists of the four steps in which the stakeholder management are separately studied for what is to be done as per literature study and whit is being done on the site.

- `Stakeholder identification`
- `Design of educational projects`
- `Implementation of the projects`
- `Evaluation of projects`

There are two different drinking water source for the households in the market area. Both of them are spring water. The water source for the School in the marketplace is about 500 meters away whereas the spring water source for most of the houses is about 1km west from the market center. The water supply lines contains different chambers. The spring water source is initially collected in a tank, then it goes into filtration through filtration tank. The filtered water is stored in a storage tank from where it is distributed to the households. There are aqueducts which supply water to the agricultural lands that are said to be very old. These aqueducts were reconstructed by Helvetas Swiss Intercooperation in 2017 to make it more reliable and durable.

10.1 Identification of stakeholders

10.1.1 As per literature

For the identification of stakeholders, initially the deprived students are identified. Then the parents of the deprived students are identified as stakeholders. Similarly the school organization committee are also identified for the reconstruction of the damaged school buildings. For the educational development of the village, the parents of the students are the main stakeholders. The organizations like Tuki sang, who are involved in different educational activities are also stakeholders.

10.1.2 As per field study

As per the field survey the stakeholders are identified as the parents of the children who are not regularly coming to school and the parents of students who have less attendance in schools are identified as stakeholders for educational projects.

10.2 Design of projects

10.2.1 As per literature

For the design of the project, stakeholders like parents, teachers and school organization committee must be involved. The parents and teachers must be involved for finding out the problems the students are facing. The school organization committee must be involved in for the design of schools to fit the future requirement of the capacity of students in newly constructed schools.

10.2.2 As per field study

During the design of the project/ programs related to education the stakeholder involvement seems to be less. They seem to have a readymade package which describes all the program and project details and they only needs location to do the projects. The organizations themselves are involved in for the design of the project/ program

10.3 Implementation of projects

10.3.1 As per literature

The students must be regularly monitored for their attendance in the schools. The poor students must be given funds or must be helped with expenses. The school buildings must be managed for different spaces for children and teachers for different activities of playing and studying. The checking of students must be continued with their performance and attendance.

10.3.2 As per field study

For the implementation of the survey, they conduct different programs to the students and their parent. They are conducted by Tuki sang along with CDECF They conduct different training activities till their required data is matched.

10.4 Evaluation of projects

10.4.1 As per literature

The stakeholder views are important for the evaluation of the project. It can be evaluated from output occurred form the project due to the completion and implementation of the programs and projects. The schools buildings must be checked for if the design and capacity has matched the future requirement of the space and function for school.

10.4.2 As per field study

During the evaluation of the project, the programs are conducted and then the general teaching activities are done. Evaluation is done simply to check if their required data of number of students are met and the capacity of school buildings are found to be sufficient.

11. Recommendation

Since the stakeholder participation is found to be very week in the area a new stakeholder management is to be made.

The new stakeholder management for education is modified as below:

11.1 Stakeholder identification for education

11.1.1 For providing quality education:

- Initially the deprived students are to be identified. Then the parents / guardians of the deprived students are to be identified as stakeholders

- The organizations willing to work for improving education quality are to be identified. They must be able to work as per the locals' requirements.

- Similarly the school organization committee are also identified who are fully or partially involved in educational activities.

11.1.2 For the reconstruction of the damaged school buildings:

- The local contractors and labors who are able to work for reconstruction of the damaged school buildings are to be selected.

- The organizations willing to work for or contribute for the reconstruction of the damaged school building are to be identified and selected.

11.2 Design of educational projects

11.2.1 For providing quality education:

- The parents of students can give their views and ideas regarding the good and practical education systems that can be designed.

- The organizations willing to work for improving education quality are to be identified and selected.

- Similarly the school organization committee has the major role for the design since they are involved in school and its educational activities more than others.

11.2.2 For the reconstruction of the damaged school buildings:

- The organizations willing to work for or contribute for the reconstruction of the damaged school building can place meetings to decide what to build and how to build for more economical, practical and functional school buildings.

11.3 Implementation of educational projects

11.3.1 For providing quality education:

- The students must be regularly monitored for their attendance in the schools to get the benefit from the competed educational projects.

- The poor students must be given funds or must be helped with expenses.

- The checking of students must be continued with their performance and practical knowledge they gained.

11.3.2 For the reconstruction of the damaged school buildings:

- The school buildings must be checked timely for the strength and space requirements and renovations and modifications must be done timely if some failures is seen in the buildings.

- The school buildings must be managed for different spaces for children and teachers for different activities of playing and studying and must not disturb the other spaces areas of the village settlement.

11.4 Evaluation of educational projects

11.4.1 For providing quality education:

- The stakeholder views are important for the evaluation of the project. They can evaluate how have the project impacted in the development of the educational activities of the village.

- It can be evaluated from output occurred form the project due to the completion and implementation of the programs and projects.

- The performance of the students can be evaluated from their attentiveness in class and participation in different ECAs and also by taking exams and tests.

11.4.2 For the reconstruction of the damaged school buildings,

- The schools buildings can be checked for if the design and capacity has matched the future requirement of the space and function for school.

- The location and design of the school building can be checked for if it is easily accessible to more number of students.

12. Conclusion

1. There are many stakeholders (organizations) in the area (in Talamarang village of Melamchi Municipality) working for the village in different sectors, so proper management of stakeholders seems to be very much important.

2. There doesn't seem to be many conflict between stakeholders (organizations) though there are many stakeholder (organizations) working in the area. A little conflict was found for the selection of management committee in school buildings for the selection of chairperson. Another conflict was found with the road construction in which there is misunderstanding between road contractor and land owners when the land were randomly used for road construction.

3. It is found out that the current practice of stakeholder management is not gone in an effective way. The stakeholder management practice must be done in the recommended way to have to projects done in a proper way.

4. The stakeholder participation seems to be better in the reconstruction process. The locals are using their old scrap stones for the reconstruction of their damaged building which supports the development of vernacular architecture of the area.

5. If the village starts to develop its resilient rural characteristics, it will attain sustainable and resilient livelihood, which also helps the village in gaining its own identity.

6. Managing Stakeholders is not going to be easy and fun but taking the right approach will help. Stakeholders must be identified as early as possible when we are assigned to a project. Stakeholders must be analyzed and understood of what they have to gain or lose from the project. A good strategy must be developed to manage the stakeholders and select right approach to keep them engaged. Right things must be done to take things correctly so communication must be done clearly with the stakeholders.

7. Due to the time limitations the research was only focused in the education sector. Further research can be done for others sectors of Reconstruction, Women Empowerment, Water Supply, Agriculture and Waste Management of Talamarang, Melamchi.

8. The municipality didn't seem to know about proper stakeholder management technique and they seem to follow the stakeholder management process only to minimum extent. But if they are given idea about proper procedure of stakeholder management techniques, they could apply them to have better output of the projects.

References

[1] James Chen. Stakeholder. [Online] `https://www.investopedia.com/terms/s/stakeholder.asp`. (Accessed: 04/28/2018).

[2] M. M. Keitsch. Stakeholder Inclusion in Design and Planning - A Case on Waste Water Management in Nepal.

[3] Association for Project Management. Stakeholder management. [Online] `https://www.apm.org.uk/body-of-knowledge/delivery/integrative-management/stakeholder-management/`. (Accessed on 05/08/2018).

[4] Charlotte. Managing stakeholders, 2017.

[5] Project stakeholder management, 2016.

[6] Project management and leadership, 2016.

[7] EU. Action for smart villages, 2016.